

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7077

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AFSP MT US
SUBJECT: MALTESE DIALOGUE WITH EUROPEANS ON NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE

REF: VALLETTA 807

1. WE HAD GENERAL DISCUSSION ON MALTA APRIL 17 WITH MFA DIRECTOR FOR WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS MANNO. MANNO SAID THAT FRENCH AND ITALIANS HAVE AGREED TO MEET AT END OF APRIL, AT LEVEL OF LEGAL ADVISORS, TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR NEUTRALITY GUARANTEE. FOLLOWING ITALO-FRENCH AGREEMENT ON HOW TO PROCEED, ANOTHER TRIPARTITE MEETING INCLUDING MALTESE WOULD BE HELD IN ROME IN MAY.

2. MANNO SAID THAT SEVERAL POINTS REMAIN UNRESOLVED. FIRST IS QUESTION OF DURATION OF GUARANTEE. FRENCH STILL WANT TWO-YEAR LIMIT, BUT ITALIANS WOULD FAVOR EITHER A LONGER PERIOD OR A SHORT INITIAL PERIOD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE DECLARATION WOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT UNLESS IT IS RENOUNCED. ITALIANS EXPECT, IN EFFECT, THAT GUARANTEE WOULD REMAIN GOOD SO LONG AS MALTA BEHAVES AS NEUTRAL. SHOULD MALTESE CARRY OUT SOME UNNEUTRAL ACT, ITALIANS WOULD BE ABLE TO RENOUNCE GUARANTEE. ANOTHER UNRESOLVED
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POINT IS QUESTION OF WHAT TO DO IF MALTESE NEUTRALITY IS VIOLATED: MALTESE WANT SOME COMMITMENT TO ACT ON PART OF GUARANTORS; ITALIANS WANT PROVISION FOR CONSULTATION FIRST.

3. THIRD UNRESOLVED POINT INVOLVES ACCESS TO MALTESE SHIPYARDS. ORIGINAL MALTESE PROPOSAL WAS TO BAR WAR-

SHIPS OF SPECIFIC NATIONS, INCLUDING US AND USSR. ITALIANS OBJECTED THAT SUCH PROVISION DISCRIMINATES AGAINST CERTAIN COUNTRIES AND NOT OTHERS AND IS THEREFORE NOT CONSONANT WITH POSITION OF NEUTRALITY. ITALIANS THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT WARSHIPS OF ALL COUNTRIES BE BARRED FROM MALTESE SHIPYARDS. MALTESE OF COURSE OBJECTED TO THIS POTENTIAL LOSS OF REVENUE, AND ISSUE REMAINS UNRESOLVED.

4. IN CONCLUSION MANNO SAID THAT MALTESE UNDERSTAND THAT QUESTION OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED UNTIL AGREED DRAFT DECLARATION IS COMPLETED. ITALIANS BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT MINTOFF IS LIKELY TO COME AROUND TO ITALIAN AND FRENCH VIEWS ON SOME OUTSTANDING POINTS IF ONLY TO HASTEN THE DAY WHEN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE CAN BE DISCUSSED. GARDNER

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